

February 14, 2007

Dear Ms. Murray,

On October 3, 2006, I conducted a Director's review meeting at the Department of Personnel, 2828 Capitol Boulevard, Olympia, Washington, concerning the allocation of your position. Present at the Director's review meeting were you and Pam Pelton, Classification and Recruitment Manager, representing the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Background

In September 2005, your managers in the Division of Child Support (DCS) contacted Human Resources Manager Brenda Moen to discuss reallocation of your Human Resource Consultant Assistant (HRCA) position, #JX05, to a Human Resource Consultant (HRC) 2. After some discussion, your managers determined your reallocation request should be at the Human Resource Consultant 1 level. In October 2005, Ms. Moen conducted a desk audit. On November 16, 2005, your management submitted an updated Position Description Form (PDF) requesting your position be reallocated to the HRC 1 level. Human Resource Consultant Lloyd Hoage also conducted a desk audit, and on February 27, 2006, Classification and Recruitment Manager David Cahill notified you that your position was properly allocated to the HRCA classification. Mr. Cahill concluded that the majority of your work is performed at the paraprofessional or technical HR level rather than the professional level of human resources.

On March 27, 2006, you filed a request for a Director's review of Mr. Cahill's determination.

The following summarizes your perspective as well as your employer's:

Summary of Ms. Murray's Perspective

Ms. Murray contends her reallocation request was submitted by her managers and states her management supports the duties listed on the PDF and that she should be reallocated to an HRC 1. Ms. Murray asserts she trains new staff on attendance procedures and how to request/process certifications and monitor outcomes. Ms. Murray further asserts she tracks employee information in the Support Enforcement Management System (SEMS) database. Ms. Murray believes the agency's denial is because she does not directly report to a Human Resources Manager. Ms. Murray, however, contends the payroll and attendance duties she performs, as well as the training she provides and rules she interprets, qualifies her to be allocated to the HRC 1 level. Ms. Murray asserts that while she is supposed to call the help desk on leave, payroll, and collective bargaining agreement interpretations, the information she receives is not always accurate. Consequently, she states she does look at and interpret rules as a result. Therefore, Ms. Murray believes her position should be reallocated to an HRC 1.

Summary of the Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS's) Reasoning

DSHS asserts the primary duties assigned to Ms. Murray's position are paraprofessional and technical rather than professional. DSHS contends the desk audit conducted for Ms. Murray's position showed that 65% of her duties were paraprofessional, which DSHS describes as the payroll processing activities she performs. DSHS also points out that attendance and payroll functions are no longer a part of the Human Resources Division (HRD); rather, those responsibilities are assigned to Financial Management Services. DSHS contends Ms. Murray's position has not been assigned routine professional duties, as envisioned by the HRC class series. DSHS asserts that in order to reach the professional HR level some delegated authority needs to be present and that this position has not received that delegation from the HRD administration. Therefore, DSHS believes Ms. Murray's position is properly allocated to the HRCA level.

Director's Determination

This position review was based on the work performed for at least the six-month period prior to November 16, 2005, the date on the PDF used in your reallocation request.

As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review meeting, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude your position is properly allocated to the Human Resource Consultant Assistant classification.

Rationale for Determination

The Human Resource Consultant class series concept notes that “[h]uman resource professionals are involved in assignments that frequently crossover or merge traditional functions and specialists.” The series includes a professional level series and a paraprofessional assistant level. While some of the duties can overlap, the professional level, which begins with the HRC 1, “[p]erforms routine professional human resource duties.” The Washington State Classification and Pay Administrative Guide describes professional duties as “predominantly intellectual as distinguished from routine or mechanical” and notes that assignments are completed by exercising discretion and independent judgment. The HRC 1 is distinguished from the HRCA because incumbents work “under the regular guidance of a higher level human resource professional or manager.”

At the paraprofessional level, incumbents perform “a variety of paraprofessional or technical duties in one or more human resource areas” and provide human resource support to management and staff. While the paraprofessional level acts as an assistant to professional staff and management, the typical work is technical, such as attendance and payroll processing, and does not encompass the same depth of human resource related work or knowledge necessary to work in the professional level positions within the Human Resources Division.

The scope of your human resource related work is limited to the technical aspects of processing functions, like attendance or processing leave slips, certifications, or PDFs, which can then be incorporated into larger human resource functions like compensation, recruitment, or classification. Therefore, consistent with the class series concept at the paraprofessional level, you support your management in a human resource area.

Your PDF (Exhibit 1) indicates you perform “routine first level professional level human resource assignments,” such as classification, compensation, recruitment, selection, affirmative action, diversity, and other personnel services. However, the desk audit conducted by Human Resource Consultant Lloyd Hoage clarifies that you perform the processing functions related to those areas, such as processing PDFs or tracking personnel actions.

Additionally, the audit notes indicate you spend 35% of your work time processing payroll forms and 20% on attendance, leave, and FMLA information. Your PDF also confirms that you prepare and process documents such as PDFs, Personnel Development Plans, organizational charts, and letters. The forms and letters you prepare, however, are in template format. The desk audit further indicates you maintain personnel files (10%), but the duties do not extend beyond the processing level in areas of recruitment, selection, or other personnel services.

You acknowledge you are supposed to call the help desk with questions on leave and payroll issues but state the help desk is not responsive or helpful. While you do some interpretation of rules and policies, work independently, and train others, those characteristics are also consistent with the HRCA paraprofessional responsibilities. Similarly, the guidance, technical assistance, consultation and advice you provide to your DCS managers, as indicated on your PDF, are also representative of the HRCA characteristics. In addition, you use a rational approach to resolve issues and ensure the processing functions related to payroll and personnel documents are timely and accurate. Those factors demonstrate how you apply your specialized knowledge and use independent judgment, which are again distinguishing characteristics of an HRCA and also relate to the core competencies of consulting and analysis and problem solving also identified at the HRCA level.

All of the above examples are further supported by the examples of paraprofessional or technical responsibilities typically assigned at the HRCA level, which include interpreting rules and policies to direct payroll actions, explaining human resource policies, procedures, and programs to employees, managers, the public, and others; providing technical assistance to support the professional responsibilities listed above; completing requests for personnel actions, benefits, etc.; and providing training or orientation in [your] area of responsibility.

There is no doubt you perform your duties in a professional manner and that you are an asset to your management, as evidenced by their support of your reallocation. However, your duties do not fall within the professional level as envisioned by the Human Resource Consultant Class Series Concept. I realize this has been a lengthy process, and if either you or your managers believe your duties have changed or expanded, you may request a review of your current duties and responsibilities in accordance with DSHS's reallocation procedure. However, based on the duties and responsibilities assigned to position # JX05 in November 2005, your position is properly allocated to the Human Resource Consultant Assistant classification.

Appeal Rights

WAC 357-49-018 provides that either party may appeal the results of the Director's review to the Personnel Resources Board (board) by filing written exceptions to the Director's determination in accordance with Chapter 357-52 WAC.

WAC 357-52-015 states that an appeal must be received in writing at the office of the board within thirty (30) calendar days after service of the Director's determination. The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

Sincerely,

Teresa Parsons
Director's Review Supervisor
Legal Affairs Division

c: Pam Pelton, DSHS
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits